



Policy Type: **Human Resources**

Policy Number: **HR-05**

Policy Title: **Workplace Violence  
Prevention**

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The Smiths Falls Public Library Board is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and is ultimately responsible for worker health and safety. We will take whatever steps are reasonable to protect our workers from workplace violence from all sources.

As defined by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, workplace violence is:

- (a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker,
- (b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker,
- (c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to a worker.

Violent behaviour in the workplace is unacceptable from anyone. This policy applies to employees, board members, library users, volunteers and members of the community at large who enter the library. Everyone is expected to uphold this policy and to work together to prevent workplace violence.

The Board is committed to develop and maintain a program, as detailed at the end of this policy, to implement this policy with respect to workplace violence, and to meeting the requirements of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

The workplace violence program that implements this policy will include measures and procedures to protect workers from workplace violence, a means of summoning immediate assistance and a process for workers to report incidents, or raise concerns.

The Smiths Falls Public Library Board as the employer will ensure that this policy and the supporting program are implemented and maintained and that all workers and supervisors have the appropriate information and instruction to protect them from violence in the workplace.

Supervisors will adhere to this policy and the supporting program. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that measures and procedures are followed by workers and that workers have the information that they need to protect themselves.

### **Responsibilities:**

Each Employee/Volunteer has the responsibility to:

- Inform his or her Supervisor of any violence, potential risk of violence or unacceptable behaviour he or she may experience or witness. This includes issues in the Employee's/Volunteer's non-work life that may impact on the Employee's/Volunteer's or his or her co-worker's safety;
- Report to his or her Supervisor any incidents of violence or close calls, according to Library procedures; Document incidents within the assigned work area
- Attend any training or information sessions provided by the employer to reduce violence or risks of violence and apply the information provided.

Management has the responsibility to:

- Assess the risk of violence to Employees/Volunteers
- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of the Employee/Volunteer, if it becomes aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that domestic violence which would likely expose a person to physical injury may occur in the workplace;
- Respond to any complaint or incidence of violence
- Take appropriate corrective action, including Employee/Volunteer discipline and management of infractions by the public and others to ensure that such activity does not continue;
- Track and monitor all incidents of workplace violence, including close calls, minor and serious incidents.

- Follow the Occupational Health & Safety Act regarding workplace violence incident reporting.
- Provide Employees/Volunteers with education and training related to the workplace violence prevention program and procedures;

### **Confidentiality and False Reports**

- All investigations shall be conducted in confidence to the extent possible. Documents will be stored in the CEO's and access to these records will be restricted.
- Employees who are found to have made false or malicious complaints will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Workplace Violence Program**

### **Plan for Maintaining Security in the Library**

1. The library staff will conduct a worksite assessment as often as necessary to ensure measures for violence prevention are effective. The assessment will:
  - a) identify jobs or locations with the greatest risk
  - b) identify high risk factors
  - c) include a physical workplace security audit
  - d) evaluate the effectiveness of existing security measures
2. The CEO, or designate, will annually review the history of past incidents to identify patterns or trends.
3. The CEO, or designate, will annually review the previously recognized areas of higher risk in the library including:
  - a) ongoing contact with the public
  - b) working alone or in small numbers
  - c) the circulation desk where money is kept
  - d) closing the library building at night
  - e) monitoring of secondary entrance to the library

### **Measures for Reducing the Risk of Workplace Violence**

1. Learn to recognize the signs of violence
  - a) Early identification and prevention of violence in the workplace is encouraged. Potential threats of violence that should be reported could include the following:

- i. threatening statements to do harm to self or others
  - ii. reference to other incidents of violence
  - iii. confrontational behaviour
  - iv. major change in personality, mood or behaviour
  - v. substance abuse
2. Institute general measures to reduce risk including:
  - a) designate the CEO's office and staff room (rooms with locking doors and telephones) as emergency safe rooms
  - b) keep secondary entrance door locked, but with 'crash bars'
  - c) keep the exterior lights around the building in good working order
  - d) ensure staff will not work completely alone when the building's doors are open and when working distant from other employees have access to a phone to allow for quick arrival of help.
3. Staff procedures to increase personal safety:
  - a) Notice your surroundings and report any unsafe or dangerous situation to the most senior staff member.
  - b) If you feel uncomfortable about a person who has entered the library, trust your instincts. If you feel threatened, make a scene - YELL!
  - c) Use a buddy system when leaving work.
  - d) If you enter a bathroom and suspect it is unsafe, do not call out. Back out, go to a safe, lockable place with telephone and call for help.
  - e) Know the nearest exit and room with a locking door.
4. Staff procedures for threatening behaviour:
  - a) Do not argue with a threatening person. Identify yourself as a library staff member. Remain calm and keep your voice low and firm.
  - b) Do not put yourself or others in danger. Keep a distance of at least four feet.
  - c) Be friendly but firm, introduce yourself, look at the person while you talk to him/her, let the person talk, clarify the problem and offer solutions.
  - d) Get assistance from another staff person.
  - e) Advise him/her that the police will be called if the abuse does not stop.
  - f) If the behaviour does not change, call the police immediately.**
  - g) Notify the CEO or designate.
5. Staff procedures for dealing with violence/assault:
  - a) If you hear raised voices or sounds of a scuffle investigate.

- b) If you witness violence or an assault call the police immediately.**
  - c) Recruit other staff to move others out of the way to a safer location.
  - d) Do not block exits to prevent a threatening/violent person from leaving the building.
  - e) Do not invade the personal space of the threatening person.
  - f) Do not get between two people fighting; call the police immediately.
  - g) Make note of details so you can describe the situation to the police.
  - h) Notify the CEO or designate.
6. Domestic Violence: Steps to Increase Your Personal Safety
- a) Tell someone at work about your situation.
  - b) Make up a "code word" for co-workers so they know when to call for help.
  - c) Ask your co-workers to screen your calls and visitors.
  - d) Ask a co-worker to call the police if your abuser enters the building.

#### **How to report a situation:**

1. A report should be made as soon as possible after an incident occurred.
2. An informal, verbal complaint may be brought forward to the CEO or designate. It is in the best interest of all concerned that a report be written.
3. If a formal complaint is made, the employee must file a written report with the CEO.
4. The report should include a brief statement of the incident, when it occurred, where it occurred, date and time it occurred, the person(s) involved and the names of any witnesses.

#### **Investigation and Dealing with Incidents or Complaints**

1. After receiving a report, the CEO or her designate will complete an investigation as quickly as possible, depending on the nature and severity of the issue. This will include interviews with the employee, the alleged perpetrator, if a staff member, and any witnesses. Should the complaint involve the CEO, the board will investigate or appoint an external investigator.
2. The results of the investigation will be discussed with the employee and other employees if appropriate; recommended preventative actions and/or resolutions presented.
3. A separate meeting will be held with the alleged perpetrator, if a staff member.

4. If the findings do not support the allegations, the CEO will recommend that no further action is necessary and that the matter be closed.
5. Should the investigation conclude that there is evidence of misconduct, the CEO will prescribe a resolution that may include police intervention.
6. Employees who are found to have made false or malicious complaints will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.